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REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action dated June 30, 2004.

By the present Amendment, the original claims 1-5 have been replaced with new claims 6-8 for purposes of clarifying the invention.

Briefly, the present invention is directed to an improved arrangement for making replacement of tape supply reels quicker and easier in machines which punch out assembled electronic circuitry parts from a carrier tape. As discussed in the background of the invention, past systems for punching out electronic parts from carrier tapes have suffered from the cumbersome tape reel exchange process described beginning on page 4, line 11 et seq. In particular, as noted on page 5, lines 5 et seq., the replacement of tape reels has required manual labor which is troublesome and time consuming, and has required suspending operations of mounting electronic parts. The present invention, on the other hand, utilizes at least a pair of tape supply reels operating in conjunction with a tape switcher located in the course of the tape supply route between a tape feeding station and the tape punching station which permits a continuous change over to a second supply reel when the first supply reel has been consumed to a last electronic part.

Reconsideration and allowance of newly submitted independent claim 6 and its dependent claims 7-11 over the cited prior art to Gfeller, Miller, Dobesch and Asai is respectfully requested. New independent claim 6 specifically defines an arrangement utilizing at least first and second supply reels for carrier tapes containing electronic circuitry parts, operating in conjunction with a tape switcher.

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More specifically, the tape switcher is defined as including upper and lower tape holder members movable toward and away from each other. These upper and lower tape holder members are:

"adapted to releaseably hold said first and second carrier tape from opposite sides in an overlapped state and over a length corresponding to two unit lengths of said electronic parts sections on said carrier tapes."

In addition, claim 6 defines:

"active and passive cutter blades provided in confronting positions on said upper and lower tape holder members to cut said first carrier tape at a longitudinally intermediate position, and splicing means adapted to splice a head end portion of said second carrier tape to a tail end portion of said first carrier tape in an overlapped state."

It is respectfully submitted that none of the cited references teach or suggest these features. For example, although the Miller references teaches a web feeding machine that has two web supply reels and a splicing mechanism to splice material from a new web to the severed end of a running web, the arrangement for doing this is completely different than that set forth in the above-noted portions of claim 6. More specifically, in Miller, material from the running web is severed at a location which is remote from the so called "kiss point" KP. As such, the tape falls freely in a loose state for a certain length, and, correspondingly, is difficult to control for stable tape feed. In the present claimed invention set forth in claim 6, on the other hand, tape holder members are provided to permit the tape from the fresh supply reel to be spliced in a controlled manner for a continuous smooth tape feed. Therefore, the structure defined in claim 6 differs significantly from that of Miller.

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Similarly, in the other primary reference to Gfeller, there is no suggestion at all of the claimed first and second supply reels operating in conjunction with the tape switcher which include the specific claimed upper and lower tape holder members, the active and passive cutter blades and the splicing means. In addition, nothing in the cited secondary references to Dobesch or Asai suggest anything to overcome the basic shortcomings of either Miller or Gfeller in meeting the terms of independent claim 6 and its dependent claims 7-11. Therefore, reconsideration and allowance of these claims over the cited prior art is respectfully requested.

Similarly, reconsideration and allowance newly presented method claims 12 and 13 over the cited prior art is also respectfully requested. Claims 12 and 13 are method claims which specifically define a method for the continuous operation of carrier tapes with electronic part sections thereon. In particular, the claims define providing at least a pair of carrier tape supply reels and tape holding members. The claims also define the specific interrelationship between the tape holder members and the carrier tape supply reels to obtain the continuous supply. In particular, the last four paragraphs of each of claims 12 and 13 define specific steps for this interrelationship between the tape holder members and the first and second carrier tapes which is not at all suggested in either of the primary reference to Miller or Gfeller or the secondary references to Dobesch and Asai. Therefore, reconsideration and allowance of these newly submitted independent method claims 12 and 13 is also respectfully requested.

In addition to the claim amendments, it is noted that a new Abstract is provided herewith in specific response to the objection to the Abstract set forth in

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paragraphs 5 and 6 of the Office Action. Therefore, reconsideration and removal of these objections is also respectfully requested.


If the Examiner believes that there are any other points which may be clarified or otherwise disposed of either by telephone discussion or by personal interview, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the number indicated below.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to the Antonelli, Terry, Stout & Kraus, LLP Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (Docket No. 1281.42909X00), and please credit any excess fees to such Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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